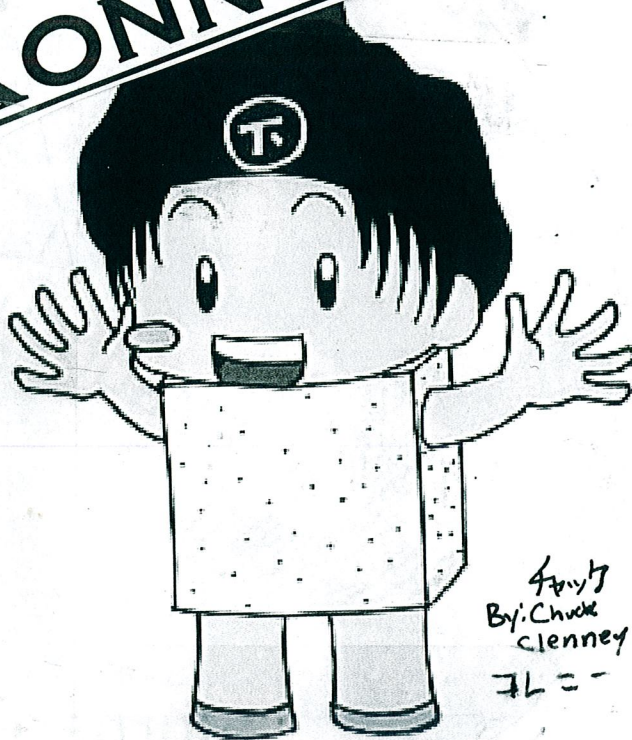
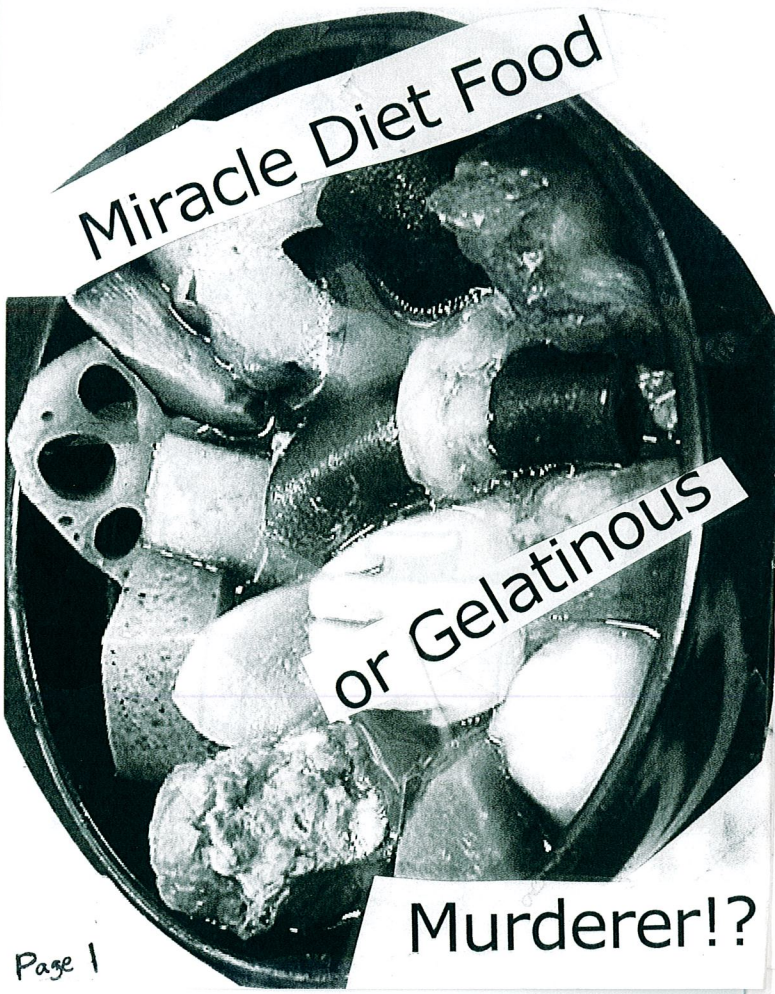


KONNYAKU



4/1/73
By: Chuck
Clenney
76 = -

Miracle Diet Food



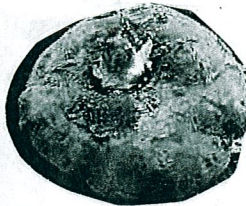
or Gelatinous

Murderer!?

Page 1

So what is konnyaku, you ask? Originally used

as a medicine in the 6th century, this seemingly magic substance is native to East Asia and grown primarily in China and Japan. In 2009, Japan produced 66,900 tons of konnyaku.



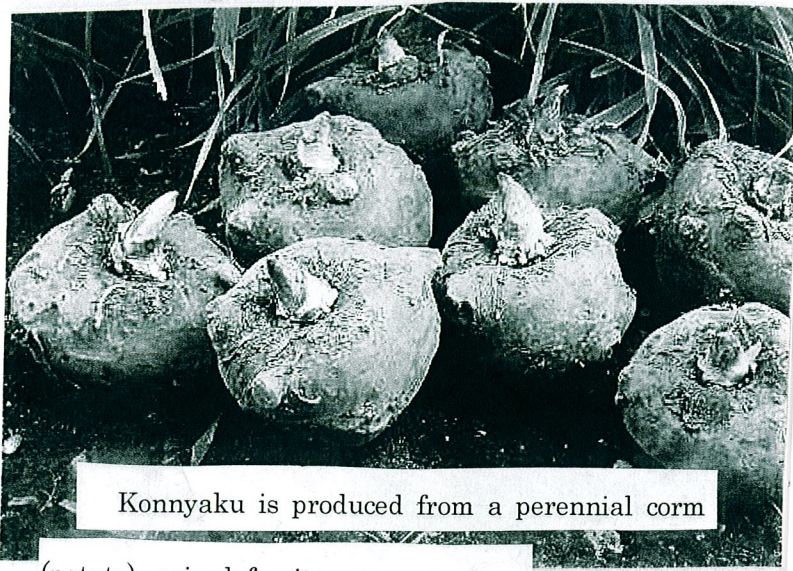
Around the world, Konnyaku is known by many names: Devil's Tongue, Konjac, 蒟蒻,

Konjar, Voodoo Lily, Snake Palm,

but to 45 people (since 1995), it is better known as the cause of death! Perhaps we should

get to know this potential menace lurking in the (brightly lit) shadows of our local supermarkets and convenience stores a little bit better.

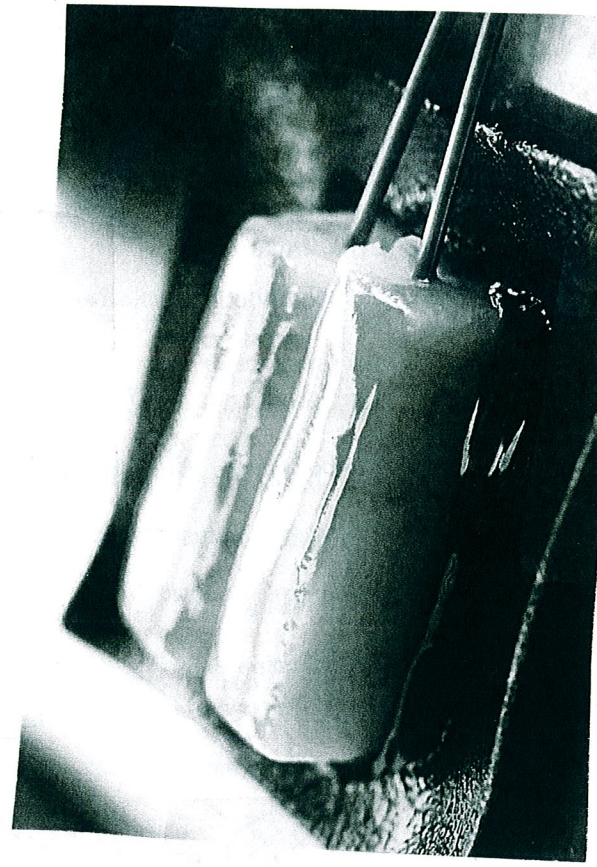
page 2



Konnyaku is produced from a perennial corm

(potato), prized for its super starchy qualities. The plant itself takes about 3-4 years to grow and the corms remain good for another 4-5 years. The final product is usually made by mixing flour with limestone water to generate its rubbery viscosity.

page 3



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page 4

Being high in fiber and extremely low in calories

(about 10 calories in a big block),

Konnyaku is prized as a diet food all over the world (that is, where it has not already

been banned). According to the Japan

Konnyaku Association, Konnyaku normalizes

cholesterol, prevents high blood pressure,

and because it consists of 50% water and 40% glucomannan (dietary fiber), the body finds it hard

to digest, thus sliding right through

you and cleaning out your intestines,

all the while giving you the illusion that you are full. Konnyaku has even been given the

nickname of "Nature's Broom" for the stomach.

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Usually there are no additives to Konnyaku

and the final product looks something like a

block of white frozen milk, but with seriously

elastic jellified properties. Often, Hijiki

seaweed is added to the product

during production, giving it a gray-with-black-specks

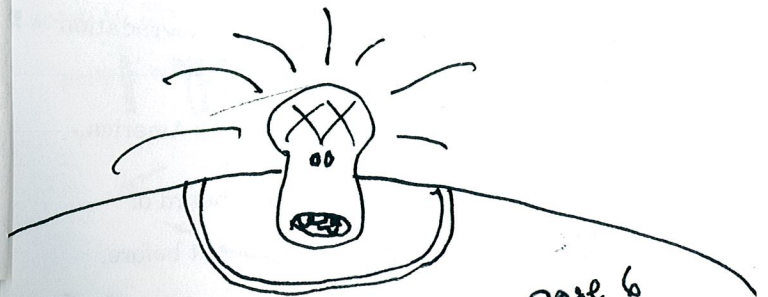
look when completed. However, be careful

when preparing this food not to eat it before it

is finished, otherwise you may end up with a

serious tummy ache, a numb tongue, and

possibly (but not surprisingly) death!



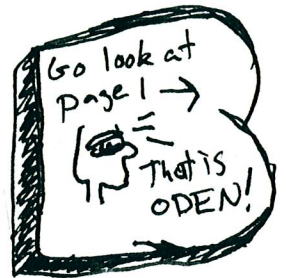
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Konjac jelly confectionery products were banned in the European Union in 2002 following the deaths of 18 children worldwide.

The United States Food and Drug Administration issued warnings about elderly people and children consistently choking when consuming. People with little to no teeth seemed to find themselves gravely surprised when the substance they were consuming did not melt in their mouths like other common forms of gelatin. This led to a number of recalls and a major degradation of Konnyaku's street cred in North America, which may be why you have never heard of it before.

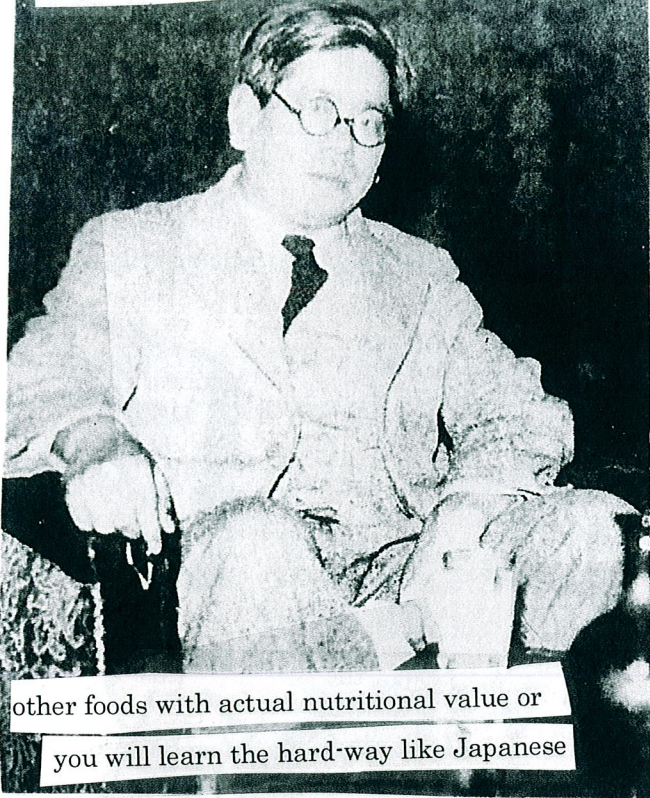
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Konnyaku also often appears as Shirataki noodles in Oden, which, if you are not familiar, is a wintertime collection of multiple foods (like eggs, radish, chikuwa (fish paste cakes)) kept in boiling hot water until consumed. Usually this is for sale at your local combini store. Oden is a seriously tasty treat if you are freezing in the cold heart of the relentless Japanese winter. Most Japanese people I have asked about konnyaku seem to like it, but there are some people who do not like the texture or the lack of



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This is good and all, but do not forget to eat



other foods with actual nutritional value or
you will learn the hard-way like Japanese

writer, Soichi Ohyake, who in the 1960s, was

page 9

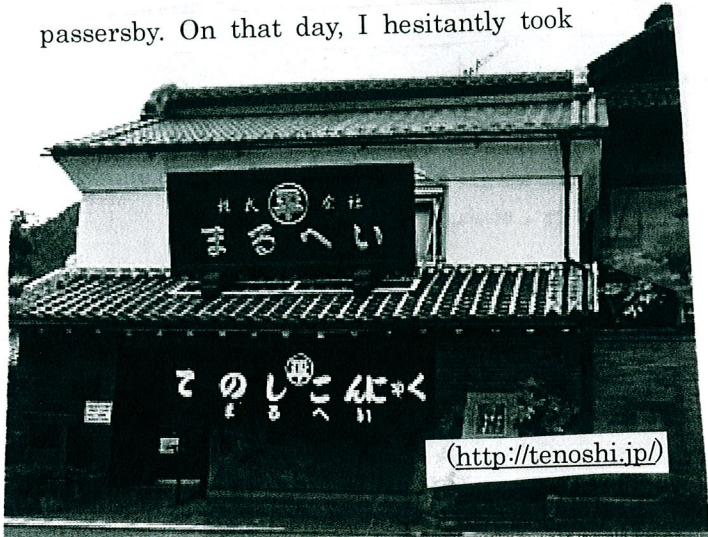
rumored to have died from malnourishment



by trying to diet on strictly Konnyaku.

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When I first came to Japan, I was on the fence about Konnyaku. I had never seen it before and did not necessarily dislike it; the texture was simply something that took some getting used to. During my first bike ride through town, some people from the Shimonita City Hall were standing under a tent handing out free Konnyaku to all passersby. On that day, I hesitantly took



Maruhei Konnyaku
Shimonita, Japan

page 11

my first bite of Miso Konnyaku, not yet knowing that I would eventually eat much more Konnyaku than I could have ever imagined and would come to develop a deep love for this gray starchy blob of limestone and tastelessness.

Many prefectures and towns in Japan grow konnyaku, but no prefectures grow as much as Gunma, and no town grows as much as my mountain home of Shimonita Town, which is known all around Gunma and the rest of Japan for their prized welsh onions (negi) and impressive Konnyaku production.

155,810 20kg bags of Konnyaku (not bad for



town of only 10,000 people!
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If you want to get your hands on some of the best
in the world, I recommend Maruhei
Konnyaku Shop in Shimonita, the unofficial
lion's den of Konnyaku. They have it all
and you can sample everything
before you buy in the very place it was made (The
Crazy-delicious dessert Konnyakus (plum, the
Burdock Root Konnyaku is my favorite).
seasonal sakura, pina colada, sesame, etc.) always
make a healthy and delicious snack
or gift. You can even learn to make
Konnyaku at the Konnyaku Tezukuritai Taiken Dojo
(translated as "place to study the way
if you want to have the experience of wanting to
make handmade konnyaku".

Learn to love konnyaku my friends, enjoy

its magically healthy qualities and try it out
in a variety of different ways: I am almost certain that you
will find the one that is right for you, but...

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DON'T
FORGET
TO
CHEW!

page 14



Lucid Adventure Poetry 001